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ABSTRACT

Issued twice yearly, this journal focuses on materials of interest to teachers of reading at the college level. The five articles in this issue deal with the following topics: basic skills instruction, judging the success of college reading programs, the effect of copying or paraphrasing structurally-cued topic sentences on passage comprehension, the emergent role of reading specialists as consultants to college faculties, and how the directions on standardized tests may preclude the application of test-wiseness strategies. (FL)

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Tell It Like It Is!

Kent Smith
Bangor Community College

Howard Cosell, the controversial sportscaster, claims to "tell it like it is." Jim Bouton, ex-major league baseball player and no stranger to controversy himself, once commented on Cosell's claim by stating, "Yes, Howard is the sportscaster who changed his name, wears a toupee, and tells it like it is!"

Regardless of any opinions we may have about Howard Cosell and/or his claim, we basic skills instructors need to be known as people who "tell it like it is." This necessity is underscored today since our colleges, because of a marked reduction in the college-age population, are actively recruiting and accepting students ill-prepared to meet the demands of college academics. Everyone seems to be counting on us to meet the educational needs of any and all students referred to us. We know, however, that such expectations are sometimes unrealistic. We must always make sure, therefore, that we are conscientiously fulfilling our obligation of informing admissions personnel, administrators, students, and teaching colleagues what we can and what we can't accomplish with students.

But to be this forthright with others (not to mention ourselves) is not always easy. We are heartened (and flattered) by the faith others seem to have in our professional skills. Yet the truth is that we encounter students every semester that we do not help in a significant way; who these students are depends, of course, upon our own particular instructional situation and

capabilities, but for many of us the following students fit into that category: those with severe learning disabilities that require more time and/or expertise than we can provide; those with major personal problems that must be dealt with before our instruction can make any impact; those with obvious motivational problems who first must come to grips whether they do or do not want to go to college.

We must level with students such as the preceding. Our chief responsibility is to provide basic skills instruction; if a student's particular circumstances prevent us from providing such instruction, we and the student have to deal with that reality.

I don't mean to imply that to "tell it like it is" simply means that we must spotlight the instructional limitations of ourselves and our programs; I do mean to imply that we must make sure our admissions personnel, administrators, teaching colleagues, and students know the parameters of our programs, including the types of students we <u>can</u> and <u>can't</u> help.

It may be that some of us are involved in such comprehensive learning assistance programs that we need not hesitate to accept any and all students who walk through our doors. But for many of us, we know there exists limitations as well as strengths in our programs. Let's make sure we do not minimize either in our contacts with others; let's be known as the professionals who "tell it like it is."

College Reading Programs -- What is "Success"?

Sigrid M. Renner

Education has traditionally been viewed as a major force for the economic, social, and personal advancement of individuals and the society in the U.S. According to a Carnegie Commission report (1973), in 1910, 2.7% of the population had completed four or more years of college; in 1970, the proportion was 7.7%, but of the college age group, 50% enrolled in college. The Carnegie Commission found that most parents want their children to go to college. In New York City in a study conducted as part of the Coleman Report, 96% of the black parents and 79% of the white parents wanted college educations for their children (Hausman, 1972). Karabel (1972) concluded that "at stake...in who is given access to the university is nothing less than the distribution of privilege in contemporary America" (p. 268).

Higher education, especially at public institutions, has become increasingly involved in complex and intense controversy--from within and without -- on what the goals of higher education should be and how these goals should be implemented. Open admissions and the fact of universal access to higher education has brought pressures for changes in the structures and philosophies of the institutions which serve the vast majority of the "new" students who enter with needs and deficiencies previously unknown to any extent at the college level.

Large numbers of students and members of society are currently expressing the view that public education in America is responsible for teaching students basic skills to levels where

all have a chance to compete equally for the so called "good life" once schooling is complete. When elementary and secondary schools fail, public colleges and universities are finding it difficult to ignore the problem of students admitted to the institutions, but unable to function successfully in them. Obviously, access does not guarantee success in college or the assurance of the benefits which generally accompany a college degree. The students who need assistance in upgrading their basic skills in order to succeed in college view themselves as victims of the system, and supported by decisions and growing public opinion, they are now demanding a piece of the pie; that is, the advantage afforded to those who hold college degrees.

It is generally agreed that lack of adequate reading skills is a major problem for both students and teachers at the college level. An official of the City University of New York estimated that as a result of open admissions in 1970, the proportion in need of remedial work had about doubled (Jaffe & Adams, 1972). It was estimated that in 1976, 51% of the students in the CUNY system needed remedial reading instruction (Schiavone, 1976). Similar estimates of deficient reading skills come from all over the country (Emond, 1976; Larsen, Tillman & Cranney, 1976; McClellan, 1970; Spring, 1975).

Written statements from prestigious groups such as the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education (1973) and all of more than 60 authors recently reviewed by this writer have urged the establishment of developmental and remedial reading programs at the college level. Two-year

colleges have been leaders in establishing such programs. 80% of 135 public two-year colleges in the mid-west surveyed in 1971 reported reading programs in their schools (Emond, 1976). However, not all of these programs can be considered successful in terms of service to students or results achieved. Many need improvement. Common weaknesses are: they are not designed to meet student needs; group instruction glosses over reading instruction; many are only short-term courses; some are not staffed by qualified professionals; some are continually experimental and unstable.

On the other hand, there is a growing number of programs reported in the literature as successful. These programs appear to have some recurring elements:

1. They incorporate counselors into the reading program (Ropp, 1974; Emond, 1976; Fishman, 1976; Kohn & Sachs, 1975; Rosella, 1970; Scott, 1977). The rationale is that counselors can help students identify their weaknesses and direct them to services offered by the school. It appears that students who are academically underprepared, and often rrom disadvantaged backgrounds, have many personal as well as academic problems which make it difficult to function at the college level.

2. They use core studies and content area reading instruction (Bergman, 1977; Fishman, 1976; Schiavone, 1976). In "successful" core programs, members of the regular faculty volunteer to teach courses in the various disciplines as members of a team with remedial specialists. In such programs students learn needed skills and receive support for their weaknesses while applying learned skills in academic courses.

3. They emphasize the individual (Anderson, C., 1969; Bopp, 1974; Carnegie Commission, March, 1970, June, 1970; Fishman, 1976; Scott, 1977; Shrauger, 1974). Concern for the individual student is seen as a key factor in many college reading programs. Individualization is achieved through reduced loads, individually paced programs and tutorial instruction. The thrust is for students and teachers to plan each program together and for teaching techniques to be geared to individual students. Students assume major responsibility for achieving goals in a flexible time schedule.

These three elements which recur as themes in reports of "successful" college reading programs have merit from a logical and common sense point of view. They may be the crucial elements for successful college reading programs. However, evaluation of college reading programs has been notoriously absent or inadequate. Too often a program is termed "successful" if the participants "feel good" about the experience. Follow-up evaluation does not exist. Gains registered in GPA, attendance, standardized test scores, and other common measures of success are rarely validated beyond a semester or a year. "Successful" is not often a welldefined term; and when it is defined, no proof is offered that the definition is valid for real life. The existence of individualization is frequently accepted on faith, and evidence of precise diagnosis of each student's need is largely missing. Many reading programs are simply not able to account for themselves.

There is a pervasive lack of commitment on the part of many school for remedial programs. It also reflects an uneasiness, felt by those in

decision making positions, about the results achieved by most reading programs at the college level.

Our society places considerable value on higher education, and increasing numbers of students needing remedial instruction are seeking the status and economic benefits which accompany a college degree. Reading programs on the college level are essential, yet they must justify their existence. A first step is to clearly define the aims of such programs -- the meaning of "success." Next, ways of evaluating programs empirically and in terms of the goals of the program must be found.

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The Effect of Copying or Paraphrasing Structurally-Cued Topic Sentences on Passage Comprehension

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The nature of the present educational system demands that students learn from prose materials. This fact has prompted continuing concern over the readability of prose discourse and the processes by which students learn from text. In one study investigating the comprehension of prose discourse, Brandt and Sherman (1976) found that learning from connected prose is significantly affected by the degree to which the organizational and thematic structures of the text can be detected by the reader. Therefore, it would be helpful to the reader if, in some way, the author could place on the printed page some key to the organizational structure which he is using. Such a key may be described as an in-print structural cue.

Of the various in-print structural cueing systems, one of the most frequently used is the underlining of key words and sentences within a passage. Crouse and Idstein (1972) demonstrated that readers' performances on questions based on statements set apart by underlining was superior to performances on questions about the same statements which had not been underlined. From this data the authors concluded that underlining serves as an encoding cue focusing the reader's attention on the underlined material.

In a similar study, Cashen and Leicht

(1970) found that the underlining of high-level idea-oriented statements resulted in greater comprehension of prose passages. In addition, Cashen and Leicht found that comprehension of the subordinate ideas and details adjacent to the topic sentences was also higher for the underlined material. Thus, the cueing of the organizational statements resulted in improved comprehension of the entire passage. This finding supports the cognitive theory which suggests that higher level, more general material can serve a subsumptive of assimilative function, integrating the more specific, lower level information (Ausubel, 1960; Bransford and McCarrell, 1974).

Wittrock, Marks, and Doctorow, (1975), found that comprehension increased when students were given cued textual materials, and that asking students to generate sentences summarizing paragraph meaning doubled reading comprehension. It could be argued, however, that the generation of sentences caused an increase in psycho-motor activity which may have accounted for the increase in comprehension. It is possible that the psycho-motor process of physically writing a sentence may have contributed to the higher comprehension scores in the generative-treatment group. A second factor which may have affected the results is time on task. Many studies have validated the idea that comprehension can be improved by increasing time on task. The extra time required to generate a paraphrase or elaboration of the topic sentence could account for the increase in comprehension. The present study sought to investigate the effects of generating a paraphrase of an underlined topic sentence on comprehension of both main ideas and details while controlling for both psycho-motor

activity and time on task.

PROCEDURE

Three prose passages were selected for use in this study. Each passage was taken from a popular periodical and each was five hundred words in length. Readability levels were assessed by using the Dale-Chall Readability Formula, and each passage had a readability level of eighth grade. The prose selections were carefully examined in order to classify the main idea statements which would be cued in each paragraph. Johnson's (1970) method for classifying text statements in terms of their importance to the overall meaning or semantic content of a passage was used. Each passage was examined by three independent raters who were asked to identify the sentences of high structural importance. Each of the three prose passages contained four paragraphs. In each paragraph the sentence which was chosen as highest in semantic or structural importance was underlined.

A ten-item test was constructed for each of the four selections. The items were completion questions and both main idea and detail questions were included on the test.

Test packets which included all three prose selections, a ten-item test for each selection, a set of general directions, and three sets of specific directions were prepared. The general directions instructed the Subjects to read each of the three prose selections carefully, and to be certain to follow the specific directions for

each passage. After reading a selection, Subjects were asked to answer the questions which followed without referring back to the passage.

The specific directions for Treatment I instructed the Subjects to read the selection carefully. The specific directions for Treatment II instructed the Subjects to read each paragraph and copy each underlined topic sentence exactly as it appeared in the selection in the space provided below each paragraph. The specific direction for Treatment III instructed the Subjects to read each paragraph, paraphrase the underlined topic sentence, and write the paraphrase of each sentence in the space below each paragraph.

To control for variations in interest in the selection topics as well as the practice effort of answering similar questions on all three tests, the order of presentation of selections and the order of specific directions for the selections was systematically varied.

A total of 132 Subjects participated in the study. The Subjects were undergraduate and graduate level college students in intact elementary education classes. All Subjects received all three treatments. The general and specific directions were read orally to insure that Subjects would be exposed to the directions. No time limits were imposed on the Subjects, but all Subjects finished within twenty-five minutes.

HYPOTHESES

It was hypothesized that Subjects would score significantly higher on a ten-item comprehension test based on a prose selection

when they were asked to read the selection and paraphrase the cued topic sentences than when they were asked to read the selection and copy exactly the cued topic sentences.

It was hypothesized that Subjects would score significantly higher on a ten-item comprehension test based on a prose selection when they were asked to read the selection and paraphrase the cued topic sentences than when they were asked to read the selection containing cue topic sentences.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data were analyzed using a one by three analysis of variance for repeated measures, and the treatment means were compared using Fisher's T. The mean scores and standard deviations for each treatment are shown in Table I.

An analysis of variance was used to compare the three treatment groups. The F score of 31.76330 was significant at the .001 level.

A Fisher's T test comparing the means for the three treatments showed a significant difference between Treatment III, paraphrasing the cued topic sentences, and Treatment II, copying the cued sentences. A significant difference has also found between Treatment III, paraphrasing the cued topic sentences, and Treatment I, reading the cued topic sentences, and Treatment II, copying the cued topic sentences.

TABLE ONE

Mean and Standard Deviation
for Each Treatment

	Treatment I	Treatment II	Treatment III
	Reading cued sentences	Recopying cued sentences	Paraphrasing cued sentences
MEAN	5.1742	5.3485	6.8409
STANDARD DEVIATION	2.3165	2.0786	1.9015

Table Two shows the comparison of the treatment means using Fisher's T.

TABLE TWO

Comparison of Treatment Means
Using Fisher's T

Treatment	I	II	III
I	0.0	-0.758	-7.2502 *
II	+0.7580	0.0	-6.4923 *
III	+7.2502 *	+6.4923 +	0.0

* Significant at .001 level.

It was hypothesized that Subjects would score significantly higher on the comprehension test based on a prose selection when they were asked to read the selection and paraphrase the cued topic sentences than when they were asked to read the selection and copy the cued topic sentences. The significant difference found between Treatment III, paraphrasing the cued topic sentences, and Treatment II, copying the cued topic sentences, supports this hypothesis.

It also was hypothesized that Subjects would score significantly higher on the comprehension test based on a prose selection when they were asked to read the selection and paraphrase the cued topic sentences than when they were asked to read the selection containing the cued topic

sentences. The significant difference found between Treatment III, paraphrasing the cued topic sentences, and Treatment I, reading the cued topic sentences, supports this hypothesis also.

The results of this study clearly indicate that asking students to paraphrase structurally important sentences does increase their comprehension of both the main idea related in the statements and the suborindate information subsumed by those statements.

The fact that no significant difference was found between Treatment I, reading the cued topic sentences, and Treatment II, copying the cued topic sentences, indicates that the copying of a structually important sentence was no more effective in improving comprehension than using a cued text.

During the administration of the tests, three investigators watched six Subjects and surreptitiously measured the reading time for each of the three selections. For all six of these Subjects more time was spent reading the selections for Treatments II and III than for Treatment I. However, only slight differences in reading time were found for the selections in Treatment III. It took no longer (for these six Subjects, at least) to paraphrase the sentence than it did to recopy the sentence. Therefore, the experimenters feel that the effect of both psycho-motor activity and time on task was controlled to some extent. These results indicate that it is the specific cognitive processing of the material, not the time spent actually manipulating the material, which affects comprehension. If structural

in-print cues are to be used as effectively as possible, they probably should be combined with some method which encourages the mental processing of the ideas found in the selection.

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The Emergent Role of Reading Specialists as Consultants to College Faculties

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Reading specialists continue to define their role in the academic and career preparation of students. (Maxwell, 1975; Kaltenbach, 1976; Chaplin, 1978; Davidson, 1978) There are labs to be operated, reading and study skills courses to be taught, tutoring to be offered, and the give and take campus politics to be contended with. Another role is emerging--that of consultant to college departments and to individual faculty members. The establishment of the reading specialist's role as consultant to college faculty is a developmental process that moves through a series of phrases: sensitizing, familiarizing, specializing, creating and coaching.

The reading instructor is perhaps most aware of the difficulties faced by college students encountering textbook material: inability to distinguish between more important and less important concepts, between relevant and irrelevant details; ponderously slow reading rate; lack of sophistication about the paragraph structure of written English; sparsely developed vocabulary; inexperience in developing self-study materials and learning volumes of material for examinations; inability to relate personal experience and prior reading knowledge to current reading tasks; inexperience at interpretation and critical thinking. Sensitivity toward these difficulties may be developed among college faculty members through informal conversations

and formal sessions around the issue of textbook selection--a long-standing and palpable problem area for many faculty members and one in which the college reading specialist has rendered consultant services in recent years.

Much has been written about the reading specialist's role in the evaluation of secondary and college textbooks. (See the extensive bibliography in Fry, 1977; also, Harker, 1977; Sardy, 1978; Strange and Allington, 1977). Attention has not been adequately paid, however, to the consultant's expertise and usefulness in another pertinent area: materials development aimed at the enhancement of student learning in college courses. More effort might be given to the exploitation of the textbook as a learning tool in college.

In response to recognized student reading deficiencies, the reading experts on the college campus can focus on the generation of materials to support student textbook reading in several ways. They can prepare materials for use in their own reading classes; they can prepare learning packages for use by content area instructors in their subject classes; and they can encourage regular college faculty to develop their own learning-support software to accompany textbooks.

A prerequisite to working with regular college faculty on materials development is the process of familiarization with college texts in current use. Many college developmental reading instructors are involved in a 'marriage of convenience' with reading textbooks and published software (and hardware). While published materials are indisputably useful as

adjunct learning aids, the overuse of them can create a gap between the skills development course and the reality of textbook reading faced by the college student.

There are several ways for reading instructors to deepen their acquaintance with college textbooks:

1. Students may be assigned to bring their texts to the reading classes or labs for use in instructional activities (e.g., survey/questioning, annotation, note-taking, test review exercises).

2. Sample texts that are used on campus in a variety of subject areas and curricula may be gathered in the reading lab. Selections from these may be used for the development of reading course lessons and assignments.

3. Reading faculty may assign and use representative college texts in their own developmental reading courses. Over several semesters materials may be designed and developed to support learning from these specific texts.

It is essential for reading specialists to experiment with textbooks, to try and err, before attempting to work with content area instructors.

Specialization is most useful as preparation for consulting with college faculty. Reading specialists do well to identify an area of strength and interest in the academic, technical or vocational curricula at their college, then they may concentrate on it,

working with textbooks in that discipline. For example, many reading instructors on college campuses have broad backgrounds in psychology. others come into reading with degrees in English literature. The specialist can exploit that background--or a college major in history, a minor in biology, an avocation in electronics, or a serious interest in Eastern philosophy or French cuisine cooking. Academic respectability can increase when the reading specialist acquires additional credentials, joining professional organizations, reads widely and generally keeps up with the discipline, via subscriptions to journals, attendance at professional conferences, communication with on-campus and off-campus faculty working in that subject area. Where possible, the reading instructor might even teach a course in the subject, thereby developing strategies for encouraging development of reading skills in the content area teaching.

As well as heighten academic acceptability, the reading specialist will develop a genuine respect for and personal involvement in that individual discipline as he works hard to read and study it. Attempts may then be made to collaborate with a department or an individual faculty member on campus. (At the same time, the reading instructor might explore ways to communicate availability to consult off-campus.) Informal conversations should lead to real professional and experimental affiliations. The reading specialist can then offer services in creating materials for use by content area instructors.

Learning support materials created for use in content area classes must differ from those used in reading classes. Directions must be

simple and explicit since the reading instructor may not be directly available to students for further clarification. Students should be directed toward processing information within course content, according to the purpose identified by the instructor for assigning the reading in the first place. The skills that are reinforced should be concrete and eminently practical.

Materials might be developed to support these skills: determining word meanings through contextual clues and/or dictionary (glossary) usage; analysis of graphic cues used in textbooks; overview and questioning of textbook format; analysis of chapter and paragraph structure; comprehension of reading content on literal and interpretive levels; annotation of text materials; outline or summary notetaking; understanding and following directions.

There are other avenues for materials creation by reading specialists. Student workshops and/or mini-courses that directly support particular academic/career/technical courses and programs might be designed. (Bergman, 1977). Commercial college textbook publishers are also beginning to seek reading instructors to develop study guides for college textbooks in a variety of academic disciplines (Walter, 1977, 1978). Sometimes the impetus and power to provide consultation to college faculty come through the skillful acquisition of federal or foundation funding.

Yet another important service, and perhaps the one with the broadest impact, which can be provided by the college reading specialist-consultant is the coaching of college faculty

to prepare and integrate reading-skills development materials into their own teaching of underprepared students. For optimum effect on the specialist's own campus, this service is best offered after the establishment of academic credibility, the sensitization of faculty members to the reading needs of students, and the creation of experimental materials that provide examples of the kinds of learning support most beneficial to students. Only then can there exist the possibility of conducting individual coaching sessions or well-conceived and executed workshops for a team, subject area unit or an entire college department.

Faculty members can be trained to analyze their own reading assignments, to assess the difficulty of their own texts, and to design appropriate support exercises and study guides tailored to both their own teaching objectives and the learning weaknesses of their own students. Sample materials may be shared and analyzed, teams of content area faculty may work together on specific textbooks, and reading faculty can suggest, guide, and edit materials for student consumption. Implementation of skills-support strategies in content area classrooms may be discussed and demonstrated. Mutual class visitations and observations by content area and reading faculty members may take place.

All of these activities presuppose a climate of trust and conditions of mutually-shared objectives by college content area faculty and reading specialists. They presuppose administrative support and economic feasibility--all of which often must be eingineered, promoted and guided by reading specialists who perceive student learning needs and wish to offer effective

consultant services on today's college campuses.

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The Directions on a Standardized Test May Preclude the Application of Test-Wiseness Strategies

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Standardized tests are an integral part of a student's life. He will encounter them at all levels of instruction and across most disciplines. For example, open-door admissions policies at junior colleges and colleges often make it necessary for institutions to screen a student after entering so that he may receive additional help at an appropriate level of instruction. The current feeling about performance on standardized tests is that application of test-wiseness principles will increase the chance that the score obtained is a fair measure of the knowledge tested. Millman, Bishop and Ebel analyzed test-wiseness in 1965 and concluded that "Test-Wiseness is logically independent of the examinee's knowledge of the subject matter for which items are supposedly measures. . ." (1965, 707). If a student is prepared for taking tests, it is reasonable that training in testmanship is likely to pay off in greater accuracy of educational measurement. However, one cannot assume that such training will be applicable to all standardized tests. Modifications may need to be made.

Recommendations and strategies to be employed when taking a standardized test are similar throughout the literature (Ford, 1973); Norman, 1976; Langan, 1978; The American College, 1978). General strategies include following directions, properly marking responses, using

time efficiently, and learning when and when not to guess. Guidelines are also available for how to answer different types of questions, such as multiple choice items.

The strategies to be employed while working through a reading comprehension subtest, which is common on many instruments, include the following: 1) preview the passage by reading the first sentence of each paragraph; 2) read the questions to establish a purpose for reading; 3) while reading the selection, mark the portions of the text which relate to the question, and 4) proceed to answer the multiple choice questions applying the guidelines recommended for this type of item.

Little of the above information is open to question. It is presented as a backdrop for another question that is now raised. Are the strategies so generalizable that they can be applied to all standardized reading comprehension tests: The answer is simple - No.

A case in point is the comprehension subtest of the Nelson-Denny Reading Test (NDRT). This instrument is worthy of mention because of its wide use as a screening device. Keeping in mind the strategies for approaching a multiple choice reading comprehension test, consider their application to the NDRT.

The directions which the student reads silently while the teacher reads them aloud conflict with the advice on test-taking which would have been shared prior to the taking of the test. Even if the student was warned about this discrepancy, the NDRT has a reading rate check built into it which precludes the application

of some of the recommended strategies.

The directions for the comprehension subtest are reprinted in Figure 1. Reactions to the underlined portions point out the areas of conflict. From the analysis in Figure 1, it can be seen that there is a dichotomy between the strategies recommended for

Figure 1

PART II. COMPREHENSION TEST AND READING RATE

Directions to Students

A. Do not turn this page of the test booklet until directed to do so.

B. There are eight selections in this part of the test.[1] Read a selection through completely; then answer the questions to the right of it. When you have completed one selection, go immediately to the next. Keep working until you have completed all eight selections or until you are told to stop. To answer a question, you may, if you wish, look back at the material you have read. But do not puzzle too long over any one question. After a reasonable effort, go on to the next question.

C. 1. If you have a self-marking answer sheet or an IBM 805 answer sheet, you will find the arrows on this page positioned in the same way as those on page 5. By aligning the arrows on this page with the arrows to the left of the answer column headed "Page 5," you will avoid having to make an alignment

when you turn to page 5. Make sure that each time you turn a page of the test booklet, the arrows on that page align with the arrows in the proper column on the answer sheet.

2. If you have an IBM 1230 answer sheet, find the heading "Comprehension Test," and then locate bold-faced item 1.

D. You will have 20 minutes to work on this part of the test.[2] The first minute will be used to determine your reading rate. When the examiner tells you to begin, turn this page and start immediately to read the selection on page 5. At the end of one minute the examiner will call "Mark."

1. If you are using an IBM 805 answer sheet, stop on the line you are reading. Note the number printed at the right of that line. On your answer sheet, locate that same number and circle it. Then go on immediately with your reading.

2. If you are using an IBM 1230 answer sheet, stop on the line you are reading. Note the number printed at the right of that line. Write each digit of that number in the proper box in the column of three boxes under the heading "Reading Rate" in the lower right corner of the answer sheet. If your reading rate consists of only two digits, write 0 (zero) in the uppermost box. Write the first digit in the middle box and the second digit in the lowest box. Then go on immediately with your reading.

E. Wait for the signal to turn this page.

[3]MAKE NO MARKS ON THIS TEST BOOKLET

Nelson-Denny Reading Test, Form A, 1960. reprinted by permission of Houghton Mifflin Company.

[1]There is no time allowed for the previewing of the selection and/or reading the questions first to establish the purpose for reading.

[2]It would be disconcerting to apply strategies to the first selection after complying with the check on reading rate. There is no opportunity for surveying either the first selection or the entire subtest to determine a time allowance for each passage. Ironically. the first selection is much longer than any of the remaining seven and it has twice as many questions as any of the others.

[3]This direction is understandable from an economic viewpoint; the booklets are reusable. However, it prevents a student from helping himself by noting relevant information directly on the selection.

test-taking and the reality of trying to apply them in a test-taking situation. What should be done? An instructor faced with this dilemma needs to gather all the pertinent facts and be the decisionmaker.

In the case under consideration, the value of a one-minute check on reading rate would have to be questioned. Agatha Townsend reviewed the NDRT in Buros' Sixth Mental Measurements Yearbook

and addressed herself to this point, ". . . the rate score is based on a testing time of only one minute, although there is considerable evidence to suggest that such a brief sample is not so reliable as rate measurement over a longer interval." (1965, 317). Thus, the reading rate check is subject to two criticisms: 1) it is not as reliable as measurement over a longer interval, and 2) it interferes with the application of test-taking strategies which are deemed helpful. A justifiable recommendation could be made that the rate check be eliminated from the testing.

Following the recommendation yields a new problem: it would be impossible to administer the test as the manual directs. Adjusting the directions does make it possible to test for just comprehension; however, changing any procedure of a standardized test puts the results in jeopardy.

While there is no single answer, a decision should be guided by factors which are relevant in each case. Questions to be answered in making such a decision include the following:

1. Why is the test being administered?

2. What needs to be measured?

3. How will the results be used?

Once these questions are answered, the problem of test-taking theory matching reality needs to be resolved. Only those testwiseness strategies which can be applied should be recommended. If the directions are modified, care needs to be taken to not to confuse the student.

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FACT SHEET
INTERNATIONAL READING ASSOCIATION
THE SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP FOR TWO YEAR COLLEGES

The Special Interest Group for Two Year Colleges of the International Reading Association is a nationwide group of educators from two and four year colleges who have the four-fold purposes of:

1. Exchanging ideas and techniques with regard to corrective, remedial, and developmental reading and study skills programs indigenous to two- and four-year colleges in the areas of methods, diagnosis of student reading problems, and evaluations of the effectiveness of the programs, textbooks, and teaching materials.

2. Proposing and encouraging the adoption of certain specific qualifications for the teachers of college reading and study programs.

3. Acting as a resource body to aid colleges in implementing or improving reading and study skills programs.

4. Sponsoring conferences and meetings planned to further the purposes of the SIG and the national IRA.

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b. SIG News Notes, the news letter that informs the national SIG membership of SIG happenings on the regional and national levels.

c. Innovative Learning Alternatives in the Community College, a "members first" publication of practical reading strategies that have been successfully field-tested by its contributors, who are usually members of the SIG.

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